

physics of wind and weather, but by the power of the human imagination.

As we have expanded the scope of our dreams, our love of flight has extended our command of the sky. Today, air travel is not only the fastest means of transportation, but the safest as well, and the United States air transportation system, which continues to improve every year, serves as the model to which all others are compared.

My Administration continues to work to make the skies ever safer. Integral to this effort has been the dedicated service of thousands of men and women throughout the air transportation community who strive daily to protect air travelers. Indeed, this month, the Vice President and I were pleased to announce that the major airlines have agreed to install fire detection systems in the cargo holds of some 3,700 airliners that carry the vast majority of Americans flying each year. We cannot make the world risk free, but we can reduce the risks we face. Working together, we have taken another important step to ensure the safety of the flying public.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Federal aid for our Nation's airports. Working in partnership with State and local governments, private airport operators, and the air carrier and general aviation communities, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assisted numerous airports with critical safety, security, and capacity projects that directly benefit the American traveling public. It is particularly fitting, as Americans celebrate an important milestone in the history of air transportation, that this year also marks the beginning of important reforms for the FAA that recognize its vital role in advancing sound aviation management and development in the United States and around the world.

On April 1, 1996, the FAA began transforming itself from the model previously mandated by law into a more effective, streamlined system, better designed for the challenges of the twenty-first century. In the recently enacted Federal Aviation Reauthorization Act of 1996, the Congress, working with my Administration, complemented those important reforms with a new financial model for the agency to help it meet the safety and capacity challenges it faces. This legis-

lation also provided the FAA with improved tools to perform its mission more effectively. It builds on security recommendations of the Vice President's Commission on Aviation Safety and Security that will improve the FAA's ability to more comprehensively address the threat posed by terrorists to civil air transportation. With these statutory improvements, the world of aviation will be an exciting one in which future aviation pioneers may fulfill their dreams and aspirations.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved December 17, 1963 (77 Stat. 402; 36 U.S.C. 169), has designated December 17 of each year as "Wright Brothers Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation inviting the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 17, 1996, as Wright Brothers Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:01 a.m., December 17, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 18.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on Cyprus *December 13, 1996*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question. The previous submission covered progress through July 31, 1996. The current submission covers the period August 1, 1996, through September 30, 1996.

I regret that intercommunal violence, including unprecedented killings of civilians, dominated events in Cyprus during this re-

porting period. These incidents raised intercommunal tensions to their worst level in many years and complicated efforts aimed at achieving a lasting solution to the Cyprus dispute. In meetings with the two Cypriot communities and the governments of Greece and Turkey, my representatives noted that the violence underscored the unsustainability of the status quo and the need for redoubled efforts toward a negotiated settlement. They advised that provocative rhetoric and actions be avoided to permit intercommunal relations to move onto a more constructive track. Similar calls were made by the United Nations and the European Union.

Notwithstanding the tragic events of August and September, my Administration remains committed to promoting a lasting peace on the island. Given the urgency of the current situation, we are appealing again for the implementation of practical measures to reduce the potential for conflict. We remain hopeful that both sides will recognize the importance of such measures and put them into immediate effect.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Philadelphia, PA, to attend the Army-Navy football game at Veterans Stadium. He returned to Washington, DC, in the afternoon.

December 8

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended a gala in the Opera House

at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

December 9

In the morning, the President met separately with Defense Minister Gen. Chi Haotian of China and with Crown Prince Sid Mohamed of Morocco in the Oval Office. Later, he taped an interview with Brian Lamb of C-Span in the Map Room for broadcast on December 15.

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe thunderstorms, high winds, rain, and flooding on November 8–15.

December 11

In the morning, in the Oval Office the President received a report of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

The White House announced that the President will visit marines and their families at Camp Lejeune, NC, on December 23, to celebrate the holiday season and highlight the contributions and sacrifices made by America's Armed Forces and their families.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released December 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry